

**DEI GRATIA
NO. 958**

**A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 30, 1870,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*"To the praise of the glory of His grace."
Ephesians 1:6.*

NO truth of God is more plainly taught in God's word than this, that the salvation of sinners is entirely owing to the grace of God. If there is anything clear at all in Scripture, it is plainly there declared that men are lost by their own works, but saved through the free favor of God; their ruin is justly merited, but their salvation is always the result of the unmerited mercy of God. In varied forms of expression, but with constant clearness and positiveness, this truth is over and over again declared. Yet, plain as this truth is, and influencing as it should be in every part of our doctrinal belief, it is frequently forgotten. Many of the heresies which divide the Christian church, spring from confusion upon this point. Were that word "grace" but fully read, marked, and learned, the great evangelical system would be far more firmly held, and plainly preached; but forgetfulness that "by grace you are saved," is a common fault among all conditions of men. Sinners forget it, and they seek salvation by the *works* of the law; they refuse to surrender to the sovereign grace of God, and entrench themselves behind the tottering fence of their own righteousness, and saints forget this too, and therefore their minds become dark, their spirits fall into legal bondage, and where they ought to rejoice in the Lord unceasingly, they become despondent and full of unbelieving dread. brothers and sisters, I am incessantly preaching here the doctrines of grace; they are growingly dear to me, and as often as I preach them, I trust they are not wearisome to you, but if they should be, that sad fact would not induce me to be silent upon them, but rather urge me to proclaim them more frequently and fervently! Your weariness of them would be a clear proof that you required hearing them yet again, and again, and again, until your souls were brought to delight in them; there is no music out of heaven equal to the sound of that word "grace," save only the celestial melody of the name of Jesus! One of the early fathers was called the angelic doctor—surely he is most angelic who preaches most of grace! Grace among the attributes is the Chrysostom, it has a golden mouth; it is the Barnabas, for it is full of consolation; it is the Boanerges, for it thunders against self-righteousness; it is man's star of hope, the wellspring of his eternal life, the seed of his future bliss.

I. We shall draw from the text our first observation—IN SALVATION AS A WHOLE WE SEE THE GLORY OF GOD'S GRACE.

So the apostle tells us, "To the praise of the glory of His grace." Every attribute of God has its own appropriate opportunity for displaying itself; to each quality of the divine nature there is a glory, and the Lord takes care that there shall be a time when this glory shall be so seen as to become the subject of praise to intelligent creatures. There is great glory in His power, and long ago He who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast, made the heavens and the earth. It was a great triumph of power, and other grand attributes combined to make the display still more glorious! Wisdom was there to balance the clouds; prudence set a compass upon the face of the deep; truth appointed the times and the seasons, and goodness arranged the habitable parts of the earth for the living creatures, and for the sons of men. All the attributes of God were exercised, but power was greatly magnified, the power which by a word created, and by its mere will made all things to stand forth! On that occasion, when the glory of God's power was revealed, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." They saw the glory of the divine power, and rendered their joyful homage. On that august occasion many of God's attributes were extolled, but there was no room for "the praise of the glory of His grace." grace found no objects in a pure creation upon which to display its full glory. There was room for God's kindness, benevolence, favor, goodness, and love—but divine grace in its true and deepest meaning needs *undeserving* creatures to operate upon, *sinful* creatures that may be pardoned, *fallen* creatures that

may be restored, justified—and there were none such condemned creatures that may be in the creation as it came from the divine hand.

Further on, the Lord took occasion to give a display of the glory of His justice. We know not precisely when or how, for the record is not full and clear, but we have the outlines—there was once a great rebellion in heaven; certain of those bright intelligences known to us as angels, for some reason or other, revolted from the divine government under the leadership of that bright son of the morning, who is now forever called the Prince of Darkness. There was war in heaven against the rule of the eternal; then flew forth the thunderbolts of Jehovah's strength, and the rebels were subdued at once by His irresistible might; then His justice flamed forth in splendor, for we read of the pit of hell that was dug for the wicked, and of everlasting fire in hell prepared for the devil and his angels; hurled from the battlements of heaven, they fell into the deeps of hell. Driven from the thrones of their glory, they became hopeless wanderers throughout the realms of misery; the praise of the glory of divine justice may be read in these terrible lines, "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." divine justice shall yet further be displayed in that tremendous day when the great white throne shall be set, and all nations shall be gathered before it, and the unjust shall receive the vengeance due for their rebellion against the Majesty of God! glorious shall be the attribute of justice, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." In all this we see no revelation of "the glory of His grace." To fallen angels He dealt out justice. Upon them holiness shot forth her consuming fire, but no word of mercy was heard, no hope of restoration was given. The Mediator took not up the angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham. So, too, in the last dread assize, justice, not mercy, shall rule the hour; He shall render unto every man according to his works. Still, there must be an opportunity to glorify the attribute of grace. Whenever we can clearly perceive that an attribute exists in God, we may fairly infer that there will be something for that attribute to exercise itself upon. It is always a hopeful circumstance that there is mercy in God, and that this mercy endures forever, for it seems to be inevitable that mercy should be exercised, and therefore when we see sin in the world, we expect to see mercy displaying its power. Yonder I see in the surgeon's dispensary a potent remedy, and it suggests to me that a certain disease falls under his eyes, and when it is raging I naturally look to see the remedy much in use. When you read of grace in the heart of God, of pity, of free favor, of sovereign mercy, it is clearly implied that there would be guilty ones upon whom that free favor would in due time be bestowed! Accordingly, we find that God has selected the salvation of the sons of men as the platform for the exhibition of His grace—that in His elect His grace may show forth its glory, just as in other events the glory of His power or of His justice has been shown.

I want you to note that a display of the glory of any attribute is not a mere proof that such an attribute exists—but an unusual revealing and magnifying of that attribute, so that it excites the attention and wonder of all beholders. Let me go back again to a display of God's power and remind you of a memorable event in the history of this world during our own historical period. We read of Pharaoh, "For this purpose have I raised you up, that I might show forth My power in you." Pharaoh, a man of a peculiarly determined disposition, of a high and haughty spirit, resolved to resist the commands of Jehovah, and to hold Israel in bondage. Jehovah ordained to reveal in him what His power could do; after first having warned him by His servants, Moses and Aaron, who worked great wonders in Pharaoh's presence, the Lord began to deal with the haughty king. He turned the waters of Egypt into blood, and slew their fish; the land brought forth frogs in abundance in the chambers of their kings. "He spoke, and there came many sorts of flies, and lice in all their borders; He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land; He smote their vines also, and their fig trees, and broke the trees of their coasts. He spoke, and the locusts came, and caterpillars and those without number, and did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground." He sent a thick darkness over all the land, even darkness that might be felt, and the king's heart was cowed for a while, but in desperate obstinacy he hardened his heart yet more, put on a brazen forehead, and again said, "Who is Jehovah that I should obey His voice? I will not let His people go." Volley after volley the artillery of heaven was discharged upon him; the Lord mighty in battle gave His enemy no respite; one by one He brought up His reserves, and fitted fresh arrows upon

His bow. The lordly monarch found himself stunned with the repeated blows, and bewildered by the terrors of his omnipotent adversary; at last the masterstroke was given which brought the tyrant to his knees! The angel of destruction was sent to smite all the first-born of Egypt, and an exceedingly great and bitter cry went up from every household in that dread night, for all the first-born were slain, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat upon the throne, to the first-born of the woman servant behind the mill! Then it was that the astonished monarch rose up in the night and said to Moses and Aaron, "Rise up, and get you forth from my people, and go serve the Lord as you have said."

Yet, before long, Pharaoh hardened his heart again, and pursued the Israelites with horses, and with chariots. You know the story, but we will rehearse it yet again, for great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and His mighty acts which were of old are to be had in perpetual remembrance; even in heaven they shall sing the Song of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb. Let us then rehearse it here below. You remember how Pharaoh in his pride pursued the children of Israel, saying, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them." In his high presumption he dared to follow the chosen of the Lord into the heart of the sea! Then "the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians." But in vain they turned themselves to flee, for in a moment when Moses stretched forth his rod, the waters, at the command of God, returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, and all the hosts of Pharaoh. They sank like lead in the mighty waters, the depths covered them, and there was not one of them left! Then was seen the glory of Jehovah's power, and then was heard the praise of that glory, for Miriam took her timbrel and went forth in the dance, while the daughters of Israel followed her, and all the hosts of Israel took up the refrain of her song, "Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and the rider has He thrown into the sea"; then was made known the praise of the glory of Jehovah's power! Now, brothers and sisters, in the work of the salvation of man you have a parallel case, for one attribute is not more glorious than another. "The praise of the glory of His grace" in rescuing man from the deep ruin into which he had fallen, in giving the Well-Beloved to bleed and die, in routing sin, death, and hell, in leading our captivity captive, in uplifting us into heaven, and giving us to be partakers of His glory through the merit of Jesus Christ our Lord—in all this, I say, grace is as glorious as was power at the Red Sea! No stinted thing then, no small matter, no subject to be whispered of, or described with bated breath, but something great, and grand, and glorious will that work of salvation be—which is to the praise of the glory of so great and favorite an attribute as the grace of God! I have tried, if I could, to think of what grace at its utmost must be; but who by searching can find out God? It is not possible for the human mind to conceive of power at its utmost; Pharaoh's overthrow gives you but a guess at what the omnipotence of the Lord can accomplish; it can shake all worlds to dust, dissolve the universe, and annihilate creation. Power at its utmost, who shall compass it? And grace, my brothers and sisters, grace at its utmost; I was about to say you see it in the Lord Jesus; and shall I err if I so speak? For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily! He is the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth! But, my brothers and sisters, our minds cannot see the utmost power of grace; human intellect is not gigantic enough to grasp it all, but believe me, if anywhere the full praise of the glory of God's grace is seen, it is beheld in the salvation of the chosen sons and daughters of men! When all the chosen ones shall be gathered together, and the church of God in heaven shall be perfect, not one living stone lacking of the entire fabric—then across that edifice shall this inscription be written in letters of the light of God, "To the praise of the glory of His grace." The work of salvation from first to last, as a whole, was devised and carried out, and shall be perfected to the praise of the glory of the grace of God! Thus much upon the first head—salvation is of the Lord, and in it grace reigns without a rival!

II. Secondly, THIS IS TRUE OF EACH DETAIL OF SALVATION.

I gather that from the position of my text. The 5th verse speaks of predestination and adoption, and the 6th verse speaks of acceptance in the Beloved. The position of my text puts all three of these under the same mark—they are all "to the praise of the glory of His grace." Brothers and sisters, the sea is salty as a whole, and every drop of it is salty in its degree—if the whole work of salvation is of grace, every detail of that work is equally of grace. The rays of the sun as a whole possess certain properties; analyze one single sunbeam, and you shall find all those properties there. I have just now said that the

whole of salvation might be resembled to a great temple, and that across its front would be written, "To the praise of the glory of His grace." Now some of the ancient Eastern buildings were erected by certain monarchs, and were dedicated to them; not only was the whole pile set up to their honor, but each separate brick was stamped with the royal coat of arms! Not only the whole structure, but each separate brick bore the impress of the builder! So is it in the matter of salvation—the whole is of grace, and each particular portion of it equally manifests in its measure the free favor of God. Let me begin at the beginning, and very briefly rehearse the different steps of the salvation of a sinner.

There was, first of all, the *election* of men and women by God before all time; He it was who chose unto Himself a people to show forth His praise; that choice was not made in any degree on account of any debt due to man, on account of any merit that existed in men, or was foreseen to exist; it was the result of *free favor* or *grace* on God's part that any were chosen to become His sons and daughters! "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight," is the Savior's answer to the question why God has hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. If any man is chosen, it is not because of a natural worthiness, or claim to preference, or any essential excellence in him which demanded that God should make the choice; we were heirs of wrath even as others; no works were taken into account whatever. The divine choice, according to Paul in the 9th chapter of Romans was, "not of works, but of Him who calls." "It is not of him, who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy."

This is still clearer, perhaps, when we come to the next step, namely, that of *Redemption*. Christ has redeemed His people from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for them. Can any man see the Son of God expiring upon Calvary, bearing the sins of man, and say that those for whom He died were worthy that Christ should die for them? It is downright blasphemy to connect any idea of *merit* with a gift as vast and free as the gift of Jesus Christ to redeem us from our sins! Why, Sirs, had we, every one of us, been *perfect*, and had we kept God's laws without omission, even as seraphs do in heaven, we would still have only done what was our *duty* to have done! There could have been no merit about our service which would deserve that Christ should die for us! Should the eternal God ever be thought to be such a debtor to His creatures that He must veil His splendor in human form, and be despised and rejected and spit upon? Shall it be said that the Son of God owes to man that He should bleed and die for them? I shudder while I raise the question or suggest the thought! It must be pure, spontaneous, impartial mercy that nailed the Savior to the tree; nothing could have brought Him from the throne of glory to the Cross of woe but *grace*, unalloyed, unbounded grace!

And when I turn onwards from redemption to the next step, namely, that of our *effectual calling*, it is the same. God is pleased to call many of us by the word of the gospel, and every gospel call is a gracious thing, for we do not deserve to be called away from our sins. If we reject those calls, and resist them, and yet, after all, the effectual grace of God comes in a more powerful way and makes the unwilling willing, and corrects the obstinacy of our hearts—why, this must emphatically be grace! The *common* call of the gospel to every sinner to come to Christ and to believe in Him and live—which call is given in the gospel every day—is grace. But to continue that call, and to make it *effectual*, even to those who have up to now resisted it, why, this is grace upon grace, super-abounding grace! If you spread a table for the hungry, that is a favor to them; if you invite them to come, and invite again and again, it is great favor; but if you "compel them to come in," as the parable has it, and bid them sit there, and lay yourself out until you have won their hearts, and persuaded them to accept your bounty—this is mercy upon mercy! Yet such is effectual calling. That ever the love of God should have compelled you and me to come and be saved when we so long stood out against it—oh, this is "to the praise of the glory of His grace!"

My dear brothers and sisters, take the next step from effectual calling to *pardon* and *justification*. I think it is not necessary that I should say that the pardon of sin must always be the effect of grace; that statement is self-evident; it cannot be due to any man that he should have his sins pardoned, for sin that *deserves* a pardon is not sin! It cannot be due to any man that God should make him righteous, he being himself unrighteous; that must be a spontaneous action on God's part, flowing from His pure kindness and love. No man can claim forgiveness, it were sacrilege to suggest that he could; pardon and justification, then, must be freely given us by God's grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Mark you well that the next series of steps which we call *sanctification*, or *perseverance*, or better still, gracious conservation—all of those must be of grace, too. No man has any claim upon God to keep

him from going into sin; I am bound to keep from sin, it is my duty—but for God to send me grace by which I am enabled to keep from sin is no right of mine; it must be His free love that does it. And if from day to day He is pleased to direct my waywardness, and bring my wandering spirit back; if after thousands of slips He still restores my soul, and establishes my goings, I dare not praise *myself* for it—I must gratefully put the crown of my perseverance in righteousness upon the head of that infinite grace which has worked all my works in me! Beloved, if you will at your leisure survey all the steps of the work of grace, you will be persuaded that you could not say of one more than another, “This is of divine grace,” but you would have to confess it equally of all. There is no point in the Christian’s life where his own merit justifies him, no period where his own strength comes to the rescue of divine power! It must be grace that makes the dead soul live—and it is equally grace which keeps the living soul alive; it must be grace that washes the sin-blackened soul, and makes it white as snow; and it must be equally grace which keeps that soul from going back to its former filthiness. From foundation to pinnacle the temple of our salvation is all of grace!

Certain skeptical philosophers have half conceded that there may have been an exhibition of divine Strength in the beginning, when the great orbs of heaven were first caused to revolve, but then they dare to question whether any fresh power is put forth to preserve the stars in their courses. You and I know that no forces of the past will suffice for the present demand, and we believe that divine power is always streaming forth to urge on the wheels of the universe, and it is even so in the little world within us. It was grace that set our hearts moving towards Christ and holiness; it is equally grace that keeps us still following after the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. As the waters cover the channels of the sea, so does grace cover all our salvation; in every jot and every tittle of our heavenly charter, grace guided the pen; from first to last salvation is free. “For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”

III. Now, brothers and sisters, in the third place, having shown that salvation is of grace as a whole and of grace in all its details, I shall notice that THE PECULIAR GLORIES OF THIS GRACE OUGHT TO BE POINTED OUT, and to be considered by us.

What are the peculiar glories of divine grace? This is not a fashionable doctrine, but we will speak it plainly and honestly. In the first place, it is a peculiar glory of grace that it is sovereign, and that the favor of God is given to man according to the absolute will of the Almighty God, and for no reason known to us but the good pleasure of His will. When a man gives away anything in kindness to the poor, he likes to exercise his own sovereignty in the gift, but no man is so absolutely a possessor of the good things of this life as to have a right to the exercise of an altogether absolute sovereignty over his goods; there must be some limit to human rights. A man, even in his free gifts, ought not to give to some, and he ought in preference to give to others. But the great and gracious God has no limits to His absolute will; there are no rights remaining to fallen man before God, except the right to suffer the infliction of justice. Man has so forfeited all claims upon God that on the ground of right he can receive nothing but eternal wrath—nothing whatever! Nor does any claim or pretense of claim in any degree influence the determination of the Most High in the gift of His grace; over the heads of all men He speaks with thundering voice, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” Absolute sovereignty is one of the glories of divine grace.

Another glory of this grace is its entire *freeness*. Man is not expected to *do* anything to earn or obtain the grace of God; he *would not* if he were expected; he *could not* if he were required; he has so utterly departed from God that he has lost the favor of God—to lose it *was* in his power, to gain it again *is not*. Nor does God bestow His favor on any man because of anything He sees in the man; neither his wealth, nor his fame, nor his position, nor his character; He looks down on man, and passes by kings and princes to let His love settle on the poor! He looks on men, and often selects the grossest transgressor and the chief of sinners, that these should become eternal monuments of His power to save them! This He does, and continues still to do most freely, spontaneously, because so it seems good in His sight.

Another glory of His grace is its *fullness*. Where God bestows His grace, it is no little grace; it is grace to cover all the man’s sins, whatever they may be; though they may be so multiplied that he cannot count them, and so gross that he cannot estimate them, yet the grace of God makes a clean sweep of them all. “I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and will not remember your sins.” “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and as a cloud, your sins.” “All

manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Blasphemy is expressly mentioned as a violent form of evil and direct attack upon God; the most heinous forms of human iniquity the grace of God blots out of the book of remembrance, and He takes those who committed those heinous sins, changes their nature, makes them His children, and receives them, at last, into His glory—and all because of the free favor which is in His heart towards them.

Another glory of this grace is its *unfailing continuance*; where once the grace of God has fallen, it is never taken away. If God, in His mercy, visits a man with grace, He never afterwards revokes the pardon He gives, or recalls the favor He has bestowed. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." grace is no intermittent brook flowing today, and dried up tomorrow; no fleeting meteor dazzling all beholders, and then vanishing in thick darkness—

*"Whom once He loves He never leaves,
But loves them to the end."*

His grace is unchanging, His mercy endures forever!

Another glory of it is that it is *unalloyed and unmixed*. God's grace in saving souls rules alone; human merit does not intrude here and there to make a patchwork of the whole. Grace triumphant can say, "I have trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Me." Grace is Alpha, grace is Omega, it is grace's glory that no mortal finger touches her work, and no human hammer is lifted up thereon. This is what men cannot bear; they will have it that man must have *some* merit, must *do* some little, but it must not be! The grace of God demands a clear stage; it saves, and it alone from first to last!

Need I add that it is one glory of this grace that while it thus reveals itself so fully, *it never interferes with any other attribute of God*? Interfere, did I say? It only tends to *illustrate* all the other glories of the divine character! God is absolute in His favor, but He is never unjust; He gives His justice to all; He allows to each one his portion due. "What?" You ask, "Is He just to those whom He favors? Does He not pass by their sins?" I answer, "Yes," but I also say, "No." He does pass by their sins so far as *they* are concerned, but He does so *justly*, for He first laid their sins upon their Surety, and exacted from Christ the vengeance due for their transgressions! He is as just towards His saints as if He had no mercy upon them, for in their Substitute His justice has received the full payment of His demands! There is no attribute of God that grace ever slight; it is on the best terms with God's truth, though truth said, "I will by no means spare the guilty." God has *not* spared the guilty, for He laid the *guilt on Christ*, and did not spare Him. And now His people are not guilty; they are absolved, there is no condemnation to them, their transgression is forgiven, their sin is covered. I say again this is the glory of grace—one of its special crowns and adornments, that though it has its way and works as freely as if justice were dead, and holiness were withered, yet it never does invade the realm of any one of those bright attributes! God is as just and as holy as if He is gracious, and yet His infinite sovereignty sways its undisputed scepter in the realm of salvation.

IV. I have brought you thus far, into the very heart of the text, and now, in the fourth place, THIS GRACE OUGHT TO BE THE SUBJECT OF PRAISE. It is "*to the praise* of the glory of His grace."

Here needs a tongue far more fluent than mine; or rather, here is needed no tongue but a warm heart and grateful thought to sit down and contemplate. As many of you as have been bought with blood and washed in it; as many of you as have been taken from among men and made to be the Lord's own peculiar people, I ask you now, in silence, to *praise God while your mind surveys the whole plan of your salvation*. Chosen before the earth was—grace, free grace! Given into the hands of Christ to be His treasure—all of grace! Redeemed with the heart's blood of Immanuel, all out of His free favor to you! Preserved when you were running into sin, slaves of Satan, and mad on your idols—preserved in Christ Jesus by long-suffering grace! Called with that voice which wakes the dead, and endowed with spiritual life—altogether of grace! Adopted into the divine family, made partakers of the divine nature because grace so willed it—what wonders are here! Brothers and sisters, in your case it was grace of the most eminent degree; if you do not say so of your case, I must say so of mine! Above all the sons of men I humbly claim to be most indebted to the grace of God, but I doubt not, my brothers and sisters, you also claim the same! There were specialties about our character; there were peculiarities about our sin; there were difficulties about our constitution which all tended to make it very remarkable that we should be the subjects of the divine love. Each one of us can say,

"What was there in me that could merit esteem?"

Or give the Creator delight?"

Now, you will glorify God if you let your soul in silence muse at the foot of the throne of grace, and worship Him of whose mercy you have so largely been made a recipient.

When you have done this, may I ask you, in the next place, to let all men see *the result of grace in you!* It has been a common slander against the doctrine of grace that it makes light of good works, and leads men to licentiousness—a slander which the lives of the people of God have amply answered in the past. Now you to whom this mercy has been shown, by your watchfulness, your hatred of the very appearance of evil, your careful walking, your close fellowship with Christ, prove to those who ridicule us, by your lives, that grace is a holy thing wherever bestowed, for it renews the heart, and sanctifies the life. You are degrading the grace of God when you are not walking as becomes the household of faith; you are honoring God better by holiness than by writing the sweetest poetry, or by uttering the most se- raphic sentences upon it. Holy *living* is “to the praise of the glory of His grace.”

Add to your holy living your own personal testimony. I do not care to hear people who are converted talking much about what they were before conversion; I am not sure that the records of horrid lives of base men are ever profitable if they are written. Perhaps the best thing to say is, “Of which things we are now ashamed”; but at the same time tell it to others that the grace of God has saved you! If you were, before conversion, given to great sins, be ashamed of them, but do tell that grace has saved such as you are! Be bold to testify in all companies that the grace of God is equal to all emergencies, and can save the lost from going quite down into the jaws of hell. Tell it everywhere that the mercy of God can blot out the grossest and vilest sins, that no man need despair, that the great heart of God is large enough to receive the most devilish of sinners! Proclaim that He passes by transgression, iniquity, and sin for Jesus Christ’s sake! Let the angels know it! When you are introduced to heaven, declare there what God’s grace has done—and till you get there let men know it here below, “to the praise of the glory of His grace.”

V. And now, lastly, let me say that the doctrine which we have taught this morning, THE TRUTH WHICH WE HAVE TRIED FULLY TO PREACH, IS THE GREAT GROUND OF HOPE FOR SINNERS.

For, in the first place, if it is so that salvation is all of the free favor of God, then here is hope for every man! You will inquire “How?” I will reply thus. Suppose there is here a man who has been guilty of some gross crime, yet others who have been guilty of the same crime have been pardoned, and have been the subjects of divine grace—why should he not be? If salvation were by *merit*, such a man clearly would be shut out of hope, and rightly considered, *every man* would be; we have, none of us, a half-a-grain of merit if we were ransacked through and through. But if it is of grace, why should not the grace of God stick on me as well as on any other man? And if it is proved that the grace of God is so sovereign that it has often fallen on the very worst of men, why not on me, if I am the very worst of men? And if I find it written that he who comes to Christ He will in nowise cast out; then I, even if I am the worst of men, am encouraged to come to Christ! He has saved others—the worst of men; He tells me if I come, if *anyone* comes, He will not cast him out; then why should I not go? Why not indeed? If there were anything like preparation, or readiness, or merit, or adaptation, then there would be no hope for me; but if it is a matter altogether of a pure, gratuitous *gift*—then why should it not be given to me as well as to another? It holds out a bright encouragement to every sinner, and it holds out hope even to the exceedingly gross transgressor because grace is evidently magnified in changing the nature of great sinners! If I am a great transgressor, and have desperately sinned, what room there will be for grace to glorify itself in me! Here is hope for me; why should I not go to God in prayer and ask to be made a trophy of His grace?

And if some should say, “But if we are not the grossest of sinners, then we seem to be shut out!” I answer, No, but rather to be included, because if any will say, “God saves the greatest of sinners because they glorify His grace most,” I would reply, God is not actuated by any selfish motive; He does not save men that He may get anything by it, and you from whom He can derive nothing are the very people He is likely to save, to prove the utter freeness and impartiality of His love. Do not for a moment imagine we are going to put *sin* in the place of *merit*, and make it appear that the greatness of their sin is the reason why the Lord will save men! If there is no reason for grace in human merit, much less is there in the degree of demerit! If you have never gone into gross sin, thank God for it, but for all that, you are sinner enough; if you see yourself as you are, you are filthy enough in all conscience—you need not be any vil-

er, and because your case does not to you appear as though you could glorify God, it is not therefore to be argued that it appears so to Him who sees not as man sees. When a surgeon meets with a case which apparently will bring no credit to him in vulgar eyes if he cures it, it is the highest honor to him that he was not deterred by the fear that it would bring him no honor. It is highly glorious to God that He is not affected by the praise of men; there is hope then for you who cannot be numbered with the grossest of transgressors. If all is of grace, then it neither shuts out big nor little, and while the gracious promises ring like a peal of silver bells, "Come unto Me all you who labor," and that with a general and universal note to every sinner under heaven, "Whoever believes in Him is not condemned," "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved," "He who believes and is baptized, shall be saved," and such like passages, why, we are greatly encouraged to come to Jesus! This doctrine that salvation is all of grace, and not of us at all, is one of the very best reasons why I, though I do not feel right, nor act right, nor am right, but am just a lump of sin, a mass of filthiness, and nothing else—should come as I am, even now, and put my trust in the blood and righteousness of Christ, and trust that I, even I, shall find acceptance in the Beloved. O that some hearts, today, may by the Holy Spirit, be encouraged to come to Christ! If you have any goodness, this sermon is a death knell for you; if you have any merits, away with you, away with you! Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. If you are not sick, what are you doing here? The physician is come to heal the sick, not those who are in health. But if you have nothing that could deserve anything of God, then to *you* is the word of this salvation sent, "To the praise of the glory of His grace."

My last word shall briefly indicate what the privilege of each sinner is who would rejoice in the sovereign grace of God. Often as we explain faith, we still need to explain it again. I met with an illustration taken from the American war. One had been trying to instruct a dying officer in what faith was. At last he caught the idea, and he said, "I could not understand it before, but I see it now. It is just this—I *surrender*, I surrender to Jesus." That is it! You have been fighting against God, standing out against Him, trying to make terms more or less favorable to yourself; now here you stand in the presence of God, and you drop the sword of your rebellion and say, "Lord, I surrender, I am Your prisoner. I trust to Your mercy to save me. I have done with self; I fall into Your arms."—

*"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Christ's kind arms I fall.
Be You my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all."*

May God bless you all. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 14; EPHESIANS 1:1-14.

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